

Statement of Honorable Lane Evans, Ranking Democratic Member,
Committee on Veterans Affairs

Before the
Committee on House Administration
March 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Hoyer, I welcome the opportunity to testify before you today with Chairman Chris Smith, on behalf of our funding request for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Veterans' Affairs Committee funding request for the 107th Congress is the product of consultation between the majority and minority. It is a Committee request. I urge your favorable consideration and approval.

Under the request proposed by Chairman Smith, there will be 34 total Committee staff. Of these total staff, 23 - or 67.6 percent - will be majority staff. Eleven or 32.4 percent will be Democratic staff.

Of the Committee staff funding request, 34.2 percent is expected to be allocated for Democratic staff in the 107th Congress, 1st session. A similar percentage is also expected to be allocated for Committee Democratic staff in the 107th Congress, 2nd session.

Office space is an entirely different matter, however. The office space now allocated to the Democratic staff is totally inadequate. It does not, in fact, accommodate the current ten members of the Democratic staff. It totals 935 square feet - that is the total space available before a copy machine, fax machines, desks, chairs, file cabinets, bookcases, and other essential office equipment is in place. I cannot accommodate fellows, interns or others who could contribute to the work of the Committee. There is no space for them nor will there be space for the 11th member of the Democratic staff provided by the funding requested for this Congress.

Chairman Smith and I have discussed this. He is sympathetic and indicated his willingness to work with me to find a reasonable solution. I ask for your assistance as well. There are two office spaces which would be good solutions. One is room 3F, an office located directly across the corridor from the space occupied by the Democratic staff. I understand it is assigned to Congressman Saxton under the auspices of the Joint Economic

Committee. As mail lies before the door for days at a time, this space is presumably not greatly used.

The other space is 321 Cannon, which is currently occupied by the Employee Identification Office of the Sergeant at Arms. This room is further down the corridor and is occupied every day. Presumably this office could be relocated to the Ford Building or perhaps at a more central location on the Hill.

Allow me to emphasize the inadequacy of the office space available to the Democratic Committee staff. Of the total office space occupied by the Committee, less than 1/5 is occupied by Democratic staff. I have not asked Chairman Smith to relinquish any office space occupied by the majority staff and I won't. I don't believe there is too much office space available to the majority staff. However, I do know there is too little for the Democratic staff.